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An Act To Establish the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the issues resulting from gender discrimination in the State exist and affect the lives of women; and

Whereas, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women should begin to work on issues resulting from gender discrimination immediately; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA c. 371-A is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 371-A

PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

§ 7029. Commission established

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, established by section 12004-I, subsection 88-A and referred to in this chapter as "the commission," is an independent commission. The commission shall promote, carry out and coordinate programs designed to improve opportunities for women in the State.

§ 7030. Membership

The commission consists of 17 members, including 7 appointed by the Governor, 5 appointed by the President of the Senate and 5 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. In making these appointments, the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall consider and appoint residents of the State who have a knowledge of problems facing women in the State, who have experience in advocacy relating to women's issues and who provide leadership in programs or activities that improve opportunities for women. The members of the commission must be chosen from throughout the State, and the majority of members must be women. A member of the Legislature may not be appointed to the commission. The Governor shall appoint 7 members, each of whom represents one of the following interests: minorities, the elderly, low-income people, persons with disabilities, youth, working with victims of domestic violence and federally recognized tribes in the State.

§ 7030-A. Term of office

Members of the commission are appointed for 2-year terms, except that, of those members first appointed, 4 appointed by the Governor, 2 appointed by the President of the Senate and 2 appointed by the Speaker of the House must be appointed for one-year terms. The term of office of each member must be designated at the time of appointment.

Members of the commission may serve after the expiration of their terms until their successors have taken office. The Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House may terminate the membership of their respective appointees for good cause. The reason for the termination must be communicated in writing to a member whose membership is terminated. The membership of any member of the commission must be terminated if the member is absent from 3 consecutive meetings without communicating good cause to the chair of the commission.

§ 7030-B. Vacancies

A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which the member's predecessor was appointed serves only for the remainder of that term and must be appointed by the same appointing authority. Any vacancy on the commission does not affect its powers.

§ 7030-C. Chair

The Governor shall select from among the members of the commission a chair and a vice-chair, both of whom shall serve for one year. These selections must be made each year prior to the first meeting of the commission. The chair is authorized to appoint subcommittees.

§ 7030-D. Powers and duties

The commission shall advise and consult with the Governor and the Legislature about, and assist them in improving, opportunities for women in the State by:

1. Research. Carrying out research programs necessary to determine the status of women in the State;

2. Activities. Promoting and coordinating activities on state and local levels designed to meet the problems of women in the State;

3. Advocate. Serving as an advocate for women in making recommendations on proposed budgetary, legislative and policy actions to the Governor, the Legislature and other officials of the State and the Federal Government with respect to state and federal policies, programs and other activities affecting or relating to women in the State;

4. Information. Informing the public about the presence or absence of opportunities for women in the State;

5. Meetings. Conducting public hearings, conferences, workshops and other such meetings to obtain information about, discuss and publicize the needs of and solutions to the problems of women; and

6. Reports. Making a biennial report to the Governor and the Legislature concerning the work and interests of the commission.

§ 7030-E. Meetings; compensation

The commission shall meet at the call of the chair not less than 4 times each year.

§ 7030-F. Staff support

The Secretary of State shall provide staffing support as required.

Sec. 2. 5 MRSA §12004-I, sub-§88-A is enacted to read:

88-A.

Women

Not Authorized

5 MRSA §7029

Permanent
Commission on the
Status of Women

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

Effective May 22, 2009.